

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 00378 270928Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01
FAA-00 /056 W
-----271156Z 064184 /21

R 270845Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6696
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, SF

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - AIRBUS ECONOMICS/RELIABILITY

REF: (A) STATE 5609, (B) JOHANNESBURG 110 (NOTAL),

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON A.H. DAVIDSON, DIRECTOR FOR ENGINEERING AND MAINTENANCE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS, TO DISCUSS AIRBUS PERFORMANCE. DAVIDSON STATED THAT IN SHORT PERIOD AIRBUSES HAVE BEEN IN USE IN SOUTH AFRICA (SINCE NOV 1976), SAA HAS
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 00378 270928Z

BEEN QUITE PLEASED WITH THEIR PERFORMANCE. MAINTENANCE AND OTHER OPERATING COSTS ARE SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN EXPECTED AND FEWER PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED THAN WITH MOST NEW AIRCRAFT SAA HAS QCQUIRED. MINOR INCIDENT REPORTED IN LOCAL PRESS IN WHICH AIRBUS TIRES DEFLATED ON LANDING WITH FULL TANKS ATTRIBUTED BY DAVIDSON TO UNUSUAL COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND DID NOT REFLECT ANY BASIC PROBLEM WITH AIRCRAFT.

INDEED BRAKES AND WHEEL PORTION OF AIRCRAFT ARE WEARING CHARACTERISTICS PROVING QUITE GOOD AND SAA PILOTS LIKE OVERALL AIRCRAFT HANDLING.

2. SAA IS USING AIRBUSES ONLY ON HIGH DENSITY DOMESTIC RUNS OF JOHANNESBURG-CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG-DURBAN AND DAVIDSON FINDS AIRBUSES PARTICULARLY WELL SUITED TO RUNS OF THIS TYPE. PASSENGER REACTION TO AIRBUS HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY FAVORABLE.

3. DAVIDSON NOTED THAT AIRBUS IS FIRST NON-AMERICAN AIRCRAFT SAA HAS PURCHASED SINCE 1937 AND INITIALLY SAA HAD QUALMS ABOUT DEALING WITH INDUSTRIE AIRBUS BECAUSE ORGANIZATION WAS COMPARATIVELY NEW AND HAD LIMITED TRACK RECORD ON AFTER-SALES SUPPORT. HOWEVER, SAA FINDS INDUSTRIE AIRBUS IS MAKING SUBSTANTIAL EFFORT ON MANUFACTURERS SUPPORT AND SAA HAS NO MAJOR COMPLAINTS. SMOOTH WORKING RELATIONSHIP WHICH SAA DEVELOPED OVER YEARS WITH US AIRCRAFT COMPANIES NOT BEING EQUALLED BUT DAVIDSON FEELS THIS WILL EVOLVE AS TWO COMPANIES GET USED TO EACH OTHER. DAVIDSON ADDED THAT BECAUSE INDUSTRIE AIRBUS WAS SUCH AN UNCERTAIN QUANTITY AT THE TIME, SAA WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO PURCHASE US AIRCRAFT IF ONE WITH EQUIVALENT ADVANTAGES FOR SHORT-RANGE OPERATION HAD BEEN AVAILABLE.

BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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